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SUBJECT: Chalabi's Provision of Services Committee - March 11

11. SUMMARY: Despite the Chairman's absence, the Provision of Services Committee met this week, hosted by the Deputy Minister of Electricity (DMoE). The meeting was well attended - the Baghdad Governor and a representative from the National Reconciliation Committee attended for the first time. The Ministry of Oil (MoO) briefed a report on oil smuggling and described a broken pipeline. The Ministry of Trade (MoT) pled for the committee to take action to remove MNF-I from Sha'ab Market. The water discussion from the previous week continued and the committee briefly reviewed several previous health, education and electricity recommendations. END SUMMARY.

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Oil Report  
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12. The Deputy Minister of Oil (DMoO) discussed a pipeline that was trespassed only three hours after becoming functional. (Note: The DMoO described the location as Taji, but later said the specific violation or trespass occurred 30 kilometers southwest of Taji, closer to Abu Ghraib, but in an area known as I'aesha. End Note) The DMoE asked for grid coordinates and more specifics in the form of a memo that will later be sent to the Baghdad Operations Command (BOC). The memo will also ask BOC to conduct a survey in coordination with the MoO in order to repair the pipeline. The Deputy Minister of Defense (DMoD) questioned why the MoO did not address this issue directly with the BOC. He noted that the MoO Operations Room is supposed to report directly to the BOC. The DMoO responded - "the MoO Operations Room did notify the BOC."

13. The DMoO also criticized the Provision of Services Committee for inaction on two memos that his ministry sent forward. A February 20 memo to the Provision of Services Committee provided a list of names of supposed oil smugglers. An earlier memo, dated January 31, detailed concerns of missing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) bottles, and particularly accused MNF-I of raiding the facilities where the LPG bottles were stored and then taking them. (Note: Some committee members acknowledged that MNF-I was not taking the LPG for their own consumption, but rather local distribution. The MNF-I representative did not have any information on the matter, but will follow-up at next week's meeting. End Note)

14. Finally, the DMoO discussed LPG and kerosene distribution in Sabi' al Bor. Approximately 25% of this allotment goes missing according to the DMoO. No resolution was offered, but it appeared as though the committee was satisfied with the results. Additionally, the DMoO said that SOMO needs more security assets. (Note: The US Embassy has received a copy of the oil report. It is currently being translated. End Note)

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Water Discussions Continue  
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15. Adding to last week's discussion on potable water, the Baghdad Water Authority (BWA) brought maps and charts reflecting trespassing locations. (Note: Last week's discussion involved a lengthy debate on water trespassing. End Note) The BWA announced that they will

launch a campaign against the violations, but also an educational campaign to discourage potable water usage for irrigation purposes. The DMOE asked BWA for a list of specific violations. He noted that main network violations were the responsibility of the police.

¶6. The BWA also conducted a survey over the course of the past week in conjunction with the municipal offices to determine water needs for the approaching summer months. The BWA representative provided a list of neighborhoods that would need potable water brought in by tankers. Former Deputy Mayor Naeim, now advisor to the Amanat, said that the municipal offices have a cumulative total of 250 tankers. He disliked the idea of renting additional trucks, stating that they would not be useful, despite the committee's previous recommendation to do so. (Note: Naeim was not in attendance at the March 4 meeting when this was discussed. End Note) DMOE pressed the Amanat and BWA about funding sources. The Governor said that the governorate will pay for the tankers.

¶7. A representative from the National Security Advisor's office (NSA) discussed the Ministry of Environment's (MoEnv) report on water quality that was delivered at the February 29 I-ESC. At that time, the MoEnv stated that 90% of water in Baghdad did not meet acceptable water quality standards. (Note: The ITAO Senior Consultant to Water disagreed with this report and said that of the water quality standards that truly matter, those that affect public health, Baghdad's water supply is 90% in compliance. Only 10% is not in compliance with those given standards. End Note) The BWA also said that only 10% was not in compliance or did not meet certain standards. He said that the Ministry of Health (MoH), MoEnv and BWA did not have standardized testing spots and methods, therefore test results were varied.

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Other Issues  
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¶8. The Ministry of Trade requested that MNF-I move a forwarding operating base (fob) from Sha'ab market in order for the Ministry to proceed with their economic development and re-start the market. The MNF-I representative had not heard of this issue previously. It is expected to be on the agenda at next week's meeting.

¶9. The committee reviewed the previous health recommendation to pay doctors overtime for on-call services. This initiative has still not been financed. The DMOE instructed the Provision of Services Committee staff members to initiate a memo to the Cabinet on this issue.

¶10. The BOC reviewed the list of power stations that were in need of additional protection, provided by the MoE. According to the BOC, only one station needs assistance. The DMOE said that those results were not surprising: station employees are too intimidated to express their needs. He suggested that nearby units conduct regular surveillance of the electricity stations.

¶11. Baghdad Clean-Up day was discussed again this week. The Amanat defended their participation in the Clean-Up days, claiming that the local municipal offices were active in the monthly event. After a debate about their level of participation, the DMOE suggested that representatives from the Ministries of Trade, Housing and Reconstruction and Industries and Minerals attend the next meeting to discuss their grievances with the Amanat. In addition, the DMOE postponed the March 15 Clean-Up day until these issues are resolved. The Governor did offer up 30 trucks and 10 trash vehicles for future Clean-Up days.

¶12. The Ministry of Education (MoEd) will meet later this week with the Ministry of Planning, Development and Cooperation (MoPDC) to lobby the Investment Commission to reallocate money to pay for school refurbishment. The meeting outcome will be briefed at next week's Provision of Services Committee meeting.

Crocker